

Dear Sir /Madam,

I am writing in response to the current proposal by the Australian Productivity Commission to screen the 1.25 million children aged 0-3yrs, to assess their social and emotional wellbeing and intervene where necessary with medication.

It deeply concerns me that the natural behaviour of a young child will be guided by an across the board screening process for all 0-3 age children. A screening process which look to check the "social and emotional well-being" of a small child.

Already in the state a huge amount of money is spent on addressing the issue of mental health and improvising the current rising levels of it. The problem however for all the money being spent is not improving. In fact we currently have a royal commission on this very subject at the minute.

It's time for another approach. We need to look more at educating new parents, equipping them with the skills to not only care for a child emotionally, but also physically and socially. A new baby comes with no rule book. It takes love and patience and village to raise a guide. More money needs to be spent investing in our communities to help parents out. When they have more help, they are better able to cope. When they cope better, we have a more stable, happy and healthy child.

A child as any parent knows can have their challenges but these are part of growing up and learning to navigate the world.

What also is of great importance is the quality of sleep, food and physical activity the child daily gets. In today's age, far too many children eat way too much sugar, and don't get enough physical exercise.

I urge the funding to be redirected and channelled into a more natural and holistic approach.

Yours sincerely
Melanie Garden